

Message Text

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R 121215Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3340

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 561

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, IN

SUBJ: COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS ON TRENDS IN THE CONGRESS
PARTY AND CPI

SUMMARY: TWO COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS IN DELHI HAVE PRIVATELY SPOKEN WITH RESERVE ABOUT THE CONGRESS PARTY'S RECENT PLENUM IN CHANDIGARH. THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR NOTES THAT THE CPI WAS VIRTUALLY IGNORED IN CONGRESSMEN'S SPEECHES WHILE HIS SOVIET COUNTERPART IS CONCERNED ABOUT NATIONALISTIC ACCENTS COMING TO THE FORE. SANJAY GANDHI'S ASCENT POSES A "COMPLICATED" QUESTION IN THE SOVIET EMBOFF'S VIEW. THE CPI IS SAID TO BE CONFRONTED BY THE NEED BOTH TO ABSORB SOME TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND NEW AND "MOSTLY ILLITERATE" MEMBERS AND TO OVERCOME "POLEMICS" REVOLVING AROUND PARTY CHAIRMAN DANGE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIVATE COMMENTS BY TWO COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS SUGGEST THAT THE AICC PLENUM AT CHANDIGARH IS NOT BEING VIEWED AS A COMFORTING DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIA'S COMMUNISTS DESPITE THE ATTACKS MADE THERE ON THE "IMPERIALISTS". THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR WHO ATTENDED CHANDIGARH TOLD AN EMBOFF JANUARY 9 THAT THE CPI WAS ONLY MENTIONED BY NAME ONCE OR TWICE IN
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THE CONGRESS SPEECHES AND THEN ONLY AS A FORMALITY.

HE DISMISSED THE ANI-US RHETORIC AS RITUALISTIC AND SAID HE SENSED THAT THE CONGRESS LEADERSHIP WAS ACTUALLY HOPING TO IMPROVE US RELATIONS IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN INDIA'S "INDEPENDENCE". THE SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR TOLD US THE SAME DAY THAT HIS EMBASSY SAW NATIONALISTIC ACCENTS DOMINATING IN CHANDIGARH. THE SOVIET EMBASSY OBSERVER ON THE SCENE REPORTED BACK THAT A YOUNGER, MORE NATIONALISTIC GENERATION WAS MOVING INTO POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CONGRESS PARTY, AND MANY WERE WED TO THE VIEW THAT THE CPI IS THE "KREMLIN'S AGENT". THE SOVIET SAID HIS EMBASSY IS WATCHING SANJAY GANDHI AND THOSE AROUND HIM (HE NAMED K.K. BIRLA AND BANSI LAL) WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST SINCE THEY POSED A "COMPLICATED" QUESTION (PRESUMABLY AS "NATIONALISTS")

2. ON CPI/CONGRESS RELATIONS THE SOVIET DIPLOMAT SAID HE FORESAW NO MAJOR PROBLEMS DEVELOPING. HE DID NOT DISPUTE OUR STATEMENT THAT THE CPSU CONTINUES TO URGE THE CPI TO GIVE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER (COMMENT: THE SOVIET MESSAGE TO THE CPI ON THE OCCASION OF ITS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE CPI'S SUPPORT OF THE "PROGRESSIVE, PATRIOTIC COURSE OF THE GOVERNMENT HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER I. GANDHI". OF THIRTY-THREE MESSAGES FROM INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES TO THE CPI, ONLY THE CPSU MESSAGE MENTIONS MRS GANDHI BY NAME. END COMMENT.) THE SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR ADMITTED THERE ARE SOME PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CPI, THE PRINCIPLE ONE IN HIS VIEW WILL BE THE ABSORPTION AND EDUCATION OF SOME 200,000 "MOSTLY ILLITERATE" MEMBERS ENROLLED DURING THE PAST YEAR (BRINGING THE PARTY'S CLAIMED MEMBERSHIP TO 600,000 MEMBERS AT THE END OF 1975. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN "POLEMICS" ABOUT PARTY CHAIRMAN DANGE'S ESSAY PUBLISHED IN 1974 SUGGESTING THAT DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM HAD ITS ORIGIN IN ANCIENT HINDU SCRIPTURE. DANGE'S ESSAY APPEARED AS A PREFACE TO A BOOK AUTHORED BY HIS COMMUNIST SON-IN-LAW, AND THE CPI SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED A PUBLIC CONFIDENTIAL

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STATEMENT THAT BOTH "THE BOOK AND ITS PREFACE DO NOT REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THE PARTY".

3. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL COULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON THE QUESTION OF DANGE'S RESTRAINED RECEPTION IN MOSCOW IN MID-OCTOBER (MOSCOW 14742). (DANGE'S MEETING WITH CPSU SECRETARY PONOMAREV TOOK PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF "MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING" WHEREAS HIS SUB-

ORDINATE, CPI SECRETARY KRISHMAN, WAS RECEIVED BY
PONOMARYEV DECEMBER 29 IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF "CORDIAL-
ITY AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING", MOSCOW 18508). HE DID
SAY THAT DANGE HAS BEEN THE CPI LEADER MOST LOYAL TO
THE USSR OVER THE YEARS, NOT EVEN STRAYING FROM THE
LINE ON THE HUNGARIA AND CZECHOSLOVAK EVENTS. COM-
MENT: IT IS POSSIBLE THAT DANGE WAS PULLED UP BY
PONOMARYEV IN OCTOBER FOR HIS SEPTEMBER PUBLIC
CRITICISM OF THE RESTRICTION OF BONUSES TO WORKERS
WHICH THE PRIME MINITER ENGINEERED.
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